

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 801

By Gresham

A RESOLUTION to honor Dale Neal of Freed-Hardeman University upon being named Coach of the Year and winning the school's first NAIA Division I National Championship.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body are pleased to recognize a gentleman who has expertly coached basketball for the past forty-eight years, instilling in his players the importance of determination, perseverance, commitment, and sportsmanship; and

WHEREAS, Dale Neal, head coach of the Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) women's basketball team for the past twenty-four seasons, epitomizes all that is positive in college athletics; and

WHEREAS, during the 2017-2018 campaign, Coach Neal led the Lady Lions to a 34-4 record and the first NAIA Division I Women's Basketball National Championship in school history, finally taking home the ultimate trophy while coaching in his twenty-second consecutive tournament, seventh Fab Four, and second championship game; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the tournament, he was honored as NAIA Division I Women's Basketball Coach of the Year, a most fitting honor for a coach and mentor who has dedicated his life to the sport; and

WHEREAS, Coach Neal has compiled a 673-176 record at FHU, qualifying him as the winningest active NAIA women's basketball coach at the Division I level with a winning percentage of .792; and

WHEREAS, for his career, Coach Neal has amassed a 906-272 record as a head coach during his twenty-four seasons at Freed-Hardeman and forty-eight seasons as a collegiate head coach; and

WHEREAS, Coach Neal has led FHU to an incredible level of success and consistency during his tenure there; the Lady Lions are one of only two programs to have won at least 20 games and competed in the NAIA National Championship every year; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the NAIA Coach of the Year honor this season, Dale Neal has also been named the Conference Coach of the Year eight times and garnered WBCA/NAIA National Coach of the Year laurels for the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 seasons; and

WHEREAS, he was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame this year as a result of his singularly successful career at Freed-Hardeman; and

WHEREAS, Dale Neal has attained preeminent status as the winningest active coach in NAIA Division I women's basketball, and he should be recognized on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Dale Neal upon being named Coach of the Year and leading the Lady Lions to the first NAIA Division I Women's Basketball National Championship in school history and extend to this exceptional coach and mentor our best wishes for much continued success next season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.